

FILE COPY

SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 54th ANNUAL CONFERENCE held at
CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, W.C.1. FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY,
4th, 5th & 6th April 1958.

FILE

Conference Sessions :

First Day	:	...	...	...	...	11.30.a.m. to 5.40.p.m.
Second Day	:	...	...	...	...	3.00.p.m. to 5.30.p.m.
Third Day	:	...	...	...	...	11.40.a.m. to 6.00.p.m.

Attendance during Conference :

	Delegates present	Branches represented.
First Day	40	19
Second Day	36	20
Third Day	42	20

Branches not in attendance:

First Day : (Morning) Birmingham, Bradford, Kelvingrove,
Kingston, Nottingham.
(Afternoon) Kelvingrove & Birmingham.

Second Day : Birmingham & Nottingham.

Third Day : Birmingham, Nottingham

Branches not represented throughout the entire Conference were
Birmingham only.

Conference Expenses :

Expenditure.	£. S. d.	Income.	£. S. d.
Conway Hall:	57.10. 0.	Donations	7. 0. 0.
Caretaker:	3. 0. 0.	Friday Collection.	17.12. 6.
Social Band:	15. 0. 0.	Saturday "	7.10. 0.
Advertising:	5. 0. 0.	H.O.Social.	4.14. 3.
Bradford.Del.	3.10. 0.	Catering Surplus.	3. 0. 6.
Kelvingrove Del.	14. 0. 0.	"Rally" Collection.	8.16. 0.
Glasgow City Del.	10. 0. 0.	Conference Social.	40. 3. 0.
Total	<u>108. 0. 0.</u>	Total	<u>88.16. 3.</u>
		Debit Balance	19. 3. 9.
			<u>108. 0. 0.</u>

* Glasgow City branch were granted £10. for their delegates expenses,
but at the time of making out the report had not claimed them.

At 11.30.a.m. The Acting General Secretary called the assembled Delegates to order. There were two nominations for Chairman. Comrades R.O.Critchfield (Ealing) & A.George (Bloomsbury) There were no nominations from the floor. The nominations were voted on by the delegation. R.O.Critchfield was elected chairman by 14 votes against A.George 12 votes.

Resolution "Wilson (Dartford)& McKone ("d Green) "That H.Young be chairman". AGREED.

It was agreed that the Standing Orders committee act as tellers.

REPORT OF THE 54th E.C. TO CONFERENCE.

1. F.C.Meetings during year. No action.
2. E.C.Attendance. " "
3. Branches, Membership & Organisation.

Resolution 1."ickford branch & Hampstead Amendment.

"ickford. That the word "world-wide be inserted in our Object between the words "a" and "system".

Hampstead. That the words "system of society" be deleted from the Object and instead the words "world wide society" inserted".

Hampstead Delegate. There was a certain amount of contention about the amendment. The amendment was tabled by the branch because they did not wish the Wickford resolution to be carried and after discussion by a larger meeting of the branch, a majority decided it would be better to leave the Object as it is.

Hampstead Amendment LOST 2 - 48.

At this juncture the Standing Orders committee read letters from Birmingham & Eccles branches explaining that there would be no Delegates from Birmingham; and that Eccles had appointed Comrade B.Bradley as a delegate, although he did not qualify by the necessary 6 months membership. The branch asked if Conference would allow the Comrade to sit in spite of this, as it was the first time for many years that Eccles would have the opportunity of being represented. Resolution Baldwin (Camberwell)& Ayres (Hampstead) "That Comrade Bradley be allowed to sit as a delegate of Eccles". AGREED.

The "ickford resolution was now discussed.

"ickford Delegate. People have behind their minds, their own national feelings. It is nowhere indicated in the Party's object that it is worldwide and people do not comprehend it.

Camberwell Delegate. It is true that workers have had their minds conditioned by a nationalist approach to things and they can not see that it is in fact a statement of a world wide system. This has to be explained to them. I am opposed to this rephrasing and rewording on principle, and for the reason that behind the principles and object of the party is a whole lot of analysis and investigation into society and if it is to be made sure that no-one will misconstrue this there will have to be volumes of stuff printed on party literature. Bloomsbury Delegate. We are opposed because it keeps coming up and it seems so useless. If anyone has got as far as being interested they will at once know "without discrimination of race or sex ...all mankind". It assumes that the average person who reads this object is illiterate.

Glasgow City Delegate. The simpler we make our statements the better, and the branch agrees that it is a waste of time and asks Conference to reject it.

"d Green Delegate. The branch has agreed that it is worth while putting it in because they consider that the whole of the D of P wants re-writing. It is back in the 1904 period. Make it simple.

Bloomsbury Delegate. If it is true that the whole of the D of P wants re-writing, and that even certain wording can be changed with advantage, that would necessitate a careful enquiry and involve a good deal of work by a body appointed by the Party. Some such enquiry was carried out a few years ago and the conclusion reached was that the D of P and Object as stated were best left as they are. If these piecemeal alterations were carried out they would necessitate scrapping of party literature as it is or pasting alterations on all existing literature and since these proposals come up every Conference, there is a great waste of time.

Hampstead Delegate. It is a matter of principle we are considering. The proposers of this are suggesting that these are matters of expediency. Personally, this is the wrong way of looking at it.
E.C.Member. The only claim for justifying this change is one of clarifying our ideas. "Could it really make our case more clear? It is never going to be possible to agree on a statement which 1,000 people think is all right. If we are going to alter a word here and there, year after year, there is going to be no clarification. If anything you are going to confound confusion."

Wickford Resolution LOST 9 - 42.

Resolution 2. Wood Green.

"That the practice of issuing numbers to Party members be discontinued and that this information be no longer required on any Party documents".
Wood Green Delegate. We feel that the question of these numbers involves quite a lot of work at H.O. and with members, and that the value of the number has no significance whatsoever. Some members have had more than one number. When ballot papers come round every member has to search to find his number to put on it.

Lewisham Delegate. Many of us have a revulsion against being numbered, but I have been asked to enquire in which way this issuing of numbers facilitates the efficiency of party business and of what real use it is to the party in its day to day work.

E.C.Member. These numbers do not hinder or facilitate our general day to day work. The Wood Green delegate is quite right about the shocking state of the party numbers. Some members have the same number as other members, so there can be some confusion. It does not really matter whether we are numbered or not.

E.C.Member. We should find out why we have these numbers. As an ex-General secretary, I cannot see the need, nor can the present General secretary. We know it is necessary to have them in Wormwood Scrubs!
Bloomsbury Delegate. In the report of the first party conference there was great use of the question of figures, the ups and downs of the figures showed how many members came in and how many went out. It is useful in a statistical way.

Ealing Delegate. If there was a query about the validity of a ballot the only check would be the numbers on the ballot papers.

Hackney Delegate. Will it make a difference to the Ballot committee?

Ballot committee member. No! Papers without numbers are not disqualified, except when the names and branches are not on them. The majority do put their numbers on.

Southend Delegate. Since we are used to being numbered we shouldn't mind. All organisations I know of find it useful to have numbers. I should imagine it has been proved by long experience to be useful from a clerical point of view in numbering the membership of any organisation, and that in the question of elections and ballots etc; it should become very important that members should have their numbers as it would be a double check between the members name and number. If these things are not being done we are adopting slipshod methods compared with other organisations. We should in the future make sure that these numbers are accurate and we should use them in a practical manner.

Hampstead Delegate. The question of numbers helps a tremendous amount. If the numbers are not being used it is not the fault of the numbers but of the organisation.

E.C.Member. This is being exaggerated out of all proportions. It makes very little additional work. It gives many members a pleasure in having a number which indicates they joined a long time ago etc., and that alone is worth while. Any organisation has numbers and for the good reason that it helps in the general administration. A member may write his name illegibly, but if his number is on the paper it can be traced. The reason it was originally instituted was that the members anticipated growing to a large size. It would be a mistake to wipe it out. Forms 'A' & 'F' are filed at H.O. and sometimes they are lost, but if the numbers are there a member can be traced, whereas the forms may not be found.

Glasgow City Delegate. The supporters of this motion are confusing sentiment with a useful thing. Numbers are necessary in the running of business and statistics, and are particularly necessary when a member has the same name as another.

Camberwell Delegate. I don't like the attitude of members who are opposed to numbers; because capitalism regiments our lives with numbers that is no reason for being opposed to organisation in the Party. It is frivolous to the point of being dangerous and the attitude in the party is a bad one. If I was on the Ballot committee and there were papers without numbers I would not accept them. You must be able to ascertain that those voting are members, and to stop duplication.

Wood Green Delegate. The majority have put the case for abolishing numbers, not for it. The main object is the question of organisation which does not exist, therefore try to relieve work where possible. Either get rid of numbers or have them in proper order. Numbers are of no value now, so wipe them out and institute them later if necessary.

Wood Green Resolution LOST 5 - 46.

FLOOR Resolution Wilson (Dartford) & Baldwin (Camberwell) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to reject all ballot papers that are incompletely returned, that is to say with no membership number".

Dartford Delegate. The party in its operating does recognise the necessity of numbers. It has been aptly demonstrated that a number has a definite use and when we have ballot papers on any issue and the membership are asked to give their name and number they are asked for a purpose, and only the party decides that it is going to change its method of enumerating membership. Those purposes must be fulfilled and it is in that sense that we submit this resolution to conference.

E.C. Member. The problem facing the E.C. has been to get members to vote at all. If this was carried it would disenfranchise members because they had not put their number on the ballot paper. There would be a low vote made smaller because members don't know or cannot use for some reason their number.

Hackney Delegate. The only purpose of a number on a ballot paper is to make sure that only one ballot paper goes to each member. The proposers of this resolution have in their minds evil thoughts about members electing their particular candidate.

Camberwell Delegate. Some members are a little worried about the past practice and accepted attitude in the party; so far as members voting and attendances are concerned is one of laxness and near indifference. It can hardly be said to be a strenuous task to fill in the number on a ballot paper. If members are interested enough to make sure that the members they want are elected, they will take the trouble of inserting their numbers.

Floor Resolution LOST BY A LARGE MAJORITY.

N.B. This item should have been inserted after Resolution 1.

Item for discussion A. Wood Green.

Resolution Judd (Lewisham) & Francis (Islington) "That this item be deferred until the arrival of the other Wood Green delegate". **AGREED.** The Standing Orders committee wrote apologising for the omission of an item for discussion on the Final Agenda for Wood Green branch's under the heading Funds, which would arise under the relevant section of the E.C.'s report.

Item B. for discussion Wood Gn. "New methods of electing E.C. Members."

Wood Green Delegate. We feel that this question of E.C. members should be drastically overhauled. A lot of enquiries to the E.C. have brought the same answers as were given in the 1920s. This is because some of the members have not changed their method of thinking with society as it is today. Prospective E.C. Members should put their case over by means of a manifesto, or to the delegate meeting so that all members who are attending those meetings can hear and see what these members are to try and do and get for the party. There should be a change in E.C. members and we should get new members in so as to get new ideas on the E.C. and that can be done by means of a manifesto at a delegate meeting.

Dartford Delegate. People who are prepared to serve on the E.C. are prepared to do the best they can in order to further the work of the party. It is suggested that prospective E.C. members are to issue an electoral manifesto. Of course we want new ideas but the fact that any member of the party is put on to the E.C. by no means assures the party that the monopoly of brains of the party shall be on the E.C. The whole of the party would be grateful to any member who can improve the party's work and add to its future progress.

Lewisham Delegate. Members of the E.C. are so because they want to be. Any member can be nominated for the E.C. If he is an active member people will get to know him and eventually vote for him, and in the meantime he will get more experience of party work.

Camberwell Delegate. For provincial members who get their ballot papers some of the nominees are not known to them. There might be some thing done to familiarise them with the nominees, but these people will become known if they are active. There has in the past few years been some new E.C. members.

Wood Green Delegate. The idea is to try and get fresh members and new ideas. You should give great thought to changing your E.C. members every three years if you like, but don't vote on names, which is what the majority do.

CONFERENCE ADJOURNED FOR LUNCH AT 1.p.m.

CONFERENCE RECOMMENCED AT 2.15.p.m.

AMENDMENTS TO RULES.

RULE 2. Lewisham Branch. "That after the words 'Branch Secretary' on line eight, the words 'or any other authorised Branch Official' be added".

AMENDMENT Hampstead branch: Delete "or any other authorised Branch Official" and insert instead "or Branch Treasurer".

HAMPSTEAD AMENDMENT LOST 17 - 32. LEWISHAM RESOLUTION LOST 21 - 28.

RULE 20. ISLINGTON. "That Rule 20 be deleted."

ISLINGTON RESOLUTION LOST 24 - 34.

RULE 29. WICKFORD. "That Rule 29 be deleted and the following substituted: 'candidates elected to a political office shall be pledged to act on the instructions of the Executive Committee'."

WICKFORD RESOLUTION LOST 16 - 35.

RULE 29. Wood Green. "That Rule 29 be amended to read as follows:

"Candidates elected to a political office shall be pledged to act on the instructions of their Branches locally, and by the Executive Committee nationally."

WOOD GREEN RESOLUTION LOST 15 - 38.

FRATERNAL GREETINGS BY TAPE RECORDER WERE HEARD FROM THE W.S.P. OF AMERICA.

Resolution Devereaux (Bloomsbury) & Cottis (Southend) "That a message of greetings be sent to the "W.S.P. of America". AGREED.

FRATERNAL GREETINGS WERE READ FROM:

Socialist Party of Ireland.

" " " Canada.

" " " Australia.

Comrade Alec Hart. An ex-Islington member now resident in South Africa. A Letter was read from Comrade R. Frank on behalf of the Vienna Socialist Group.

It was generally agreed that Fraternal greetings be sent to the above. Resolution Baldwin (Camberwell) & Cottis (Southend) "That a tape recorded message of fraternal greetings be sent to the W.S.P. of America". AGREED.

FINANCE.

Camberwell Delegate. The balance in hand of the Parliamentary Fund was £58.0.6.d. on the 31.12.57. and from the donations it seems that Camberwell is the only branch which donates to this fund. Other branches should do likewise. The Head Office Assistant's Fund is dwindling, and something urgently needs to be done about it.

E.C. MEMBER. If some branches gave more consideration to the question of payment of dues, the financial position of the party would be greatly eased.

Camberwell Delegate. Disagreed with the E.C. in knowing, but not mentioning the names of branches whose arrears position was bad. The financial standing of branches should be brought to the notice of the Central Organiser and steps be taken to get hold of this money. The party exists on the basis of dues taken and it's up to the branch secretaries and treasurers that the collection of dues is expedited and for H.O. to see that there is no accumulation of dues.

E.C. Member. We do not get 26/- per member at H.O. as the branch retains some, and there are members over 65 years who do not pay dues, also a considerable portion of dues are waived.

E.C. Member. The E.C. are aware of this situation and last Tuesday they charged the Finance committee to look into this and contact branches about dues. Nine branches of the party write off 44%, 87%, 50%, 42%, 39% and some branches collect the proper amount but don't send it on to H.O.

Item for discussion. FUNDS. Wood Green.

Wood Green Delegate. A lot of members and branches are in favour of acquiring funds by letting H.O. if and when we move. Arguments against letting H.O. are (1) That we should work harder to produce new members who in turn will produce funds (2) We should not go into business (3) That any funds required will be forthcoming when need arises, and when we ask for it. We did ask for it but we did not get it. We only got £50. We have invested socialist money in Clapham. I see no objection whatsoever to acquiring reasonably permanent funds for the party by letting part or all of H.O.

Camberwell Delegate. The income the party gets should be obtained by selling literature, holding meetings and getting collections.

Resolution "Next Business" Baldwin & Ayres.

CARRIED 18 - 9.

MASTER FORM 'C'.

E.C. Member. With regard to the last statement on the Master Form 'C'. Manchester branch had been included.

A discussion took place whether Conference should continue with the E.C. Report and Items for discussion or discuss Literature.

Resolution James (Hackney) & Cottis (Southend) "That we take Literature now".

CARRIED BY AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY.

LITERATURE.

Resolution 3. ISLINGTON, & AMENDMENT BLOOMSBURY.

Islington. "That this Conference instructs the Executive Committee that in future issues of the Socialist Standard all correspondence shall be answered by the Editorial Committee."

Bloomsbury Amendment. "That all correspondence published in the Socialist Standard which in the view of the Editorial committee requires answering, should be replied to in the same issue."

Islington Delegate. "We thought that the correspondence would be answered in the same issues but this was not the case and we feel it should be."

Kingston Delegate. The branch does not wish to endorse this, as while every letter should be answered it is not wise in all instances that the answer should be given by the Editorial committee. The answers to some letters should be delegated.

Camberwell Delegate. It was thought that a correspondence column in the S.S. without answers would make it a lot more lively. It has not worked out like that. We have had plenty of time to see the kind of effect that it has had.

Resolution Cox (Fulham) & Cottis (Southend) "That the vote on the Amendment be taken".

CARRIED 19 - 16.

Ayres (Hampstead) challenged the vote. On a recount it was LOST 20-16.

Bloomsbury Delegate on their amendment. We thought that we detected uncertainty in the wording of the Islington resolution. With this in mind, that correspondence does appear reasonably and rightly in the S.S. which sometimes does not require an answer by virtue of the fact that the answer might sometimes be mere agreement and sometimes redundant. The hands of the committee would be tied to much if they were required to reply to all correspondence, and we suggest that they should decide what correspondence should be replied to and what not.

Paddington Delegate. We did not expect any fantastic results in the 12 months. The branch takes a dim view of most of the letters which have been published in the S.S. There might be some connection between the subject matter of the letters and the subject matters from which the letters sprang. This is a venture worth carrying on. We don't agree with Bloomsbury which would defeat the purpose of the last year's Conference resolution. If we had letters on economic crises etc., and those letters were continued over a period of months perhaps it would be that those letters were worth while. We cannot cater for everyone. If the Editorial committee exercised more discretion on the type of letters published they would not be quite so bad as they have been over the past 12 months.

Lewisham Delegate. It is not an easy proposition to answer questions over a period of months. We should rely on the committee's good judgement on what correspondence they publish.

Paddington Delegate. Did the Editorial committee publish the type of letters that they did to teach Paddington branch a lesson? Editorial committee member. No we did not. We pointed out last year a number of defects which inevitably faced this proposal, one is the time factor. A letter published in March must have a reply by the middle of March to go into the April S.S. Not all the letters were published, but the best were selected. We sometimes conferred with the E.C. as to what Conference required. Party members are interested in religion. This is what they write about. I regret that the thing has turned out as it has because as reported to Conference a large number of readers of the S.S. welcome the existence of the correspondence column.

Hackney Delegate. I am surprised to hear that the correspondence selected was the best of a bad lot. I think things have been exaggerated a little. I saw 3 letters which were far better than the letters on religion. One letter was handed to me to answer but was too late for the next issue, but went in the form of an article in the following issue. It does not matter that letters are not replied to in the same issue, but that we should have such a poor show in the correspondence columns after 54 years does matter.

Bloomsbury Delegate. One objection to Islington's resolution is that it says 'all correspondence shall be answered by the Editorial committee'. The amendment says nothing about selection of letters.

BLOOMSBURY AMENDMENT CARRIED 37 - 19. AS A SUB-RES CARRIED 37 - 19.

RESOLUTION 4. HAMPSTEAD. "That the correspondence column in the Socialist Standard in its present form be stopped".

Hampstead Delegate. It has been already carried in the previous resolution and we are prepared to move on to next business or vote.

HAMPSTEAD RESOLUTION LOST 13 - 33.

RESOLUTION 5. CAMBERWELL & HACKNEY AMENDMENT.

Camberwell. "That the Education Committee be asked to draw up suitable lectures from the education syllabus for inclusion in the Socialist Standard to replace the present correspondence, inviting members and non-members to write questions and views to be dealt with by post."

Hackney Amendment. "Delete 'to replace the present correspondence'".

Camberwell Delegate. We are not concerned whether we have correspondence as well as the proposition about literature. The classes are thoroughly well prepared and they can only reach at best half a dozen members who can attend them or hear recordings but they should be got out in writing and included as a syllabus in the S.S. for members and non-members, to invite their queries and reactions. This has been done before.

E.C. Member. It looks highly desirable. The delegates may have received the syllabus of the classes. The ones mentioned would be general knowledge ones. These take nearly an hour to deliver. The essence of the lecture would have to be taken out and would take about 2 foolscap pages. They could not be published as given. It is a mammoth task. It would fill the S.S. There would be no room for correspondence or anything else. What is required is the essence of the syllabus in the S.S. We could try and condense and get them in.

Hackney Delegate on their amendment. The branch felt that the inclusion of the part 'to replace the present correspondence' was being used by Camberwell as a method of getting rid of the correspondence. On the other hand it would be a good thing to see these educational things in the S.S.

HACKNEY AMENDMENT CARRIED 35 - 18.

CAMBERWELL RESOLUTION AS AMENDED CARRIED 27 - 23.

THE CONFERENCE ADJOURNED AT 5.40.p.m.

STURDAY SESSION COMMENCED AT 3.p.m.

LITERATURE CONTINUED.

RESOLUTION 6. HACKNEY. "That Forum be re-established, provided that material is available, and be published bi-monthly, using the Head Office duplicator".

Hackney Delegate. If Forum is started up again and duplicated it can be distributed amongst the branches and involve no loss and we could even make a small profit and it should be based on educational and theoretical arguments, and would create a channel of discussion among party members. Two members of the old I.P.J. committee are prepared to publish Forum and some members are prepared to go to H.O. to do it.

Lewisham Delegate. We want to find out the question of cost and the possibility of another loss and the question of whether it is going peter out as it did before. We should have some more definite ideas of the plans envisaged to keep it going regularly and in a proper manner.

E.C. Member. The cost would be quite low. If we produced a 12 sheet Journal (24 pages) - more words than the Forum which was printed - the cost of the paper and stencils would be under £10 if we used 500 copies and if we sold 400 which was the circulation of the old Forum when it closed down, there would be a profit of £1. or two at 6d copy. If the publication sells reasonably well, we will be able to afford to pay a professional typist to prepare the stencils.

Camberwell Delegate. I hope people do not envisage a new inter-party journal. The provision of space for educational things in the S.S. provides for this. If it is going to be the party case in Forum it should be in the S.S. but if it is going to attack the party then I don't want its resurrection and I will oppose it.

E.C. Member. Forum folded up because of lack of material. Conference last year that if there was a demand it would continue. I would like to see some indications that material is going to be available before voting on this. 24 pages were mentioned. This would involve 2/3rds more than was in the previous Forum. I think there are a good many members of the party who would like to be put right on things and some of the articles in Forum did a good service. The resolution in saying bi-monthly is setting this task of finding material on who-ever is to produce Forum. It would be more useful if Conference could agree not to have forum at a regular interval but to have forum as and when the need arose. It would be useful in publishing the findings of the Study Group on Crises for instance.

Bloomsbury Delegate. A cogent case has not been put forward by the movers of this resolution regarding contributors and who is going to do it. It is a large task, and the branch object to it being done by duplicator. Any reasonable number of pages to be read from duplicated paper is tedious and unattractive and the only way is to have a different kind of duplicator or have it printed.

Hackney Delegate. It may be true that there are difficulties in the way and that duplicating may not be as attractive as print but we are more interested in the interest being there to overcome these difficulties. We think it can be presented with a reasonable amount of attractiveness. It would come out if the material was available but it may not always be available but we would still have an J.P.J. which would be capable of expressing the different viewpoints of the members. I feel that there are a number of things which could be discussed with particular relevance to the party. It would facilitate writers, get them used to writing etc.,

HACKNEY RESOLUTION LOST 23 - 29.

FLOOR RESOLUTION BRYAN (PADDINGTON) & SELWYN (PADDINGTON) "That this Conference recommends that a duplicated Forum be published from time to time when material is available."

Resolution Baldwin (Camberwell) & Cottis (Southend) "NEXT BUSINESS".
LOST BY A CONSIDERABLE MAJORITY.

Paddington Delegate. Some of the criticisms against the original resolution had some merit. To tie a publication like Forum to a definite time might be unrealistic and there is no point in bringing it out if there is no material but if members do wish to discuss any items which are of interest there is no reason why they should not. It is unnecessary to tie it to bi-monthly. If there are items forthcoming then it should be published.

Wickford Delegate. I would have preferred to deal with the question of writers classes first. We should then have an outlook for the students to send their articles to Forum. It is said that there might be a danger in Forum but I have no fears on this score. It would be better to give writers a vehicle to express themselves.

Camberwell Delegate. I have no fears about the dangers of Forum, but some members don't like facing up to the reason why the party is in existence. There was some useful work done by Forum. Nothing hurt me more than the fact that it had a limited circulation. You have got to face up to the fact that though interesting, this is not what we are in existence for. It is nothing to do with our work of getting out propaganda material and working for socialism.

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Lewisham Delegate. The logic of the previous speakers remarks is that there can be no difference of opinion among party members but there is and always will be. There is always the danger that Forum may degenerate as it did before. Though as we have the task of working for socialism, I don't see why we can't educate ourselves in the process.

Fulham Delegate. If there is something new to be said, it is better to and easier to understand if it is in print.

Lewisham Delegate. If Forum deteriorated it is because the dissension is in the party and it is not stopped by not having the Forum. It has been found very difficult to run classes at H.O. Is it not possible that Forum could usefully be used to educate members?

Bloomsbury Delegate. I would rather the E.C. kept an eye on the situation and if it is found that there are members willing to write, it could make a proper investigation.

Resolution Gill (Hampstead) & Catt (Dartford) "That the vote be taken".
CARRIED BY A LARGE MAJORITY.

Paddington Delegate. We are organised as a propaganda organisation but in order to be effective we must know our case, not just bare outlines. A member can never reach the stage when he can say I know enough. Discussion, and hearing new points of view, and new aspects which may not be interesting in the S.S. or not suitable, these are things which can make us better propagandists and this is the purpose of Forum.

RESOLUTION CARRIED BY A LARGE MAJORITY.

Item E. for discussion (Paddington) & Item G. (Hackney).

Paddington Delegate. The question of the S.S. has been put on the Agenda for the second year by the branch as members of the branch and members generally take the point of view that the S.S. today is a more important media of propaganda than in past years, inasmuch as outdoor speaking is not what it was. We should endeavour to have an S.S. which fits the bill as much as possible. We have differences of opinion on what the S.S. should be like. Most of us agree that the S.S. is not quite what we want. Paddington feels that the SS falls down on the content and the general layout and presentation of the articles. The way articles are broken up etc., The first thing the party has got to determine is a policy for the SS. We must agree as to who the SS is written for. Some members think that the SS is written primarily for non-socialists; others for canvassing; we should have simple articles and short words; that the SS should be written more for the intelligent section of the working class. We think it should be primarily written for socialists. Until members are interested in the SS it will have little or no effect. The SS should be a socialist commentary on current world affairs. It should give information and a slant on things which due to a lack of time for reading would be of interest and use to members. The SS today is unbalanced. Some are worthwhile articles but the rest leave me cold. In the past the standard of writing of the articles was higher than today and the number of subjects were larger and more diverse and the manner in which they were dealt with was on a higher level than it is today. We would like Conference to discuss and endeavour to agree on who the SS is written for. If we can agree that it is written for members we can start to consider the problems. Positive proposals which would be useful as points of discussion to a committee or party meeting - writers class; formation of educational committee, whether in its present form it is the best kind of committee the party could find (editorial committee); whether they have too much to do; policy for the continuity of articles. Perhaps a single issue of the SS should be devoted to one subject e.g. economic crises.

Hackney Delegate. We feel that there is no liaison between the writers and the Editorial committee. Sometimes a writer says 'I am going to write about so-and-so'. The relation between writers and committee should be as to the best lines to proceed on certain subjects. The Editorial committee should suggest that certain things should be done at certain times. When the Editorial committee does approach members it is a panic situation. These so-called simple articles contain a tremendous amount of abstractions far and away beyond the political understanding of the casual reader. The SS is meant for everybody and is attractive to nobody. We want you to make the SS worthy of the party.

Camberwell Delegate. We want constructive examples. Although the SS has shortcomings, it is not as black as it is painted.

Bloomsbury Delegate. What we need is a full time Editor. We should either aim at having a popular journal or else an international review, with an arty-crafty bias.

E.C. Member. The party is a cross section of the population. The members say what is interesting to various members of the population accordingly, therefore some of the articles which one thinks abominable, others like. The SS represents the general attitude of the people outside: people write about things they think important. We should continue that way but in certain respects it has gone down because members are not doing what they did long ago. They studied and showed the results. Members are trying to get away with superficial stuff. They should have a sound economic and political outlook. It rests not with the Editorial committee but with the members. We did try to get members interested in particular subjects to study them and write articles. The SS should not be written for socialists. Socialists should write in the SS to try and convert non-socialists.

Public Delegate. It cannot be denied that the SS is the best that the party can produce. The purpose of the SS surely is to make people who come into contact with it interested enough to absorb the ideas of socialism. People to whom the SS has been sold have not been sufficiently interested in socialism to go further. It should be addressed not to socialists but to people who are interested in socialism and to do that you have got to write articles that will definitely arouse interest, whatever the subject.

Resolution Bryan (Paddington) & Selwyn (Paddington) "That discussion of the S.S. be deferred until Sunday afternoon". CARRIED OVERWHELMINGLY.

The CONFERENCE ADJOURNED AT 5.30.p.m.

The SUNDAY SESSION COMMENCED AT 11.40.a.m.

MEMBERSHIP & ORGANISATION.

Item for discussion C. Islington branch.

Islington Delegate. Branch newsletters let branches know what is going on in each branch. When branches are near to each other they can get together to prevent duplication canvassing and let each other know about meetings in each other's districts.

Wood Green Delegate. The branch has changed its meeting night from Thursday to Friday with the object of being able to attend other branches who meet on Thursday.

Lewisham Delegate. Some organisers here today may remember the successful organisers meetings held at H.O. in December. The C.O. arranged to hold one in January but we have not had it yet. It was disappointing at the last one which didn't deal with any change on ideas of propaganda but the meeting assumed that we were utilising the best methods that we could devise, and only wanted more support from members and the working class. These meetings should allow for some criticism of the present methods.

E.C. Member. The new Central Organiser has only been in office for a few weeks. The last Delegate Meeting asked the E.C. to get the C.O. to run meetings of branch organisers from time to time. There has been no organiser since the end of last year, and the new C.O. will be informed of the resolution passed last year.

FLOOR RESOLUTION LAWRENCE (LEWISHAM) & MOSTYN (ISLINGTON) "That the C.O. be approached with a view to organising further meetings at H.O.".

RESOLUTION AGREED.

Item for discussion D. Camberwell.

Camberwell Delegate. The purpose of this item is to probe into Central branch members with a view to getting them to be active. There has been an influx of Central branch members with the packing up of some branches in the last few months.

E.C. Member. Of the 150 ballot papers sent to Central branch members on Conference matters, only 34 were returned. Since the winding up of Manchester branch only one member was lost. S.W. London is still in the process of dissolving. Some of the members have joined other branches and about 10 have joined Central branch. About 20 members of S.W. London have still not made up their minds. Some are no longer there. We always try to get members to join other branches. It is not the tendency to drift away from Central branch. Response to an appeal to join local branches was not very good. There was a meeting of Central branch members here yesterday but it was very small and it was thought that there should be periodical meetings of Central branch members.

Item A for discussion. "Wood Green. "Reworking the Declaration of Principles with a view to making its meaning more clear."
Wood Green Delegate. It has long been my experience of a number of people that they find the words and phraseology of the D of P confusing.

Hampstead Delegate. What have "Wood Green in mind? Is it a basic English version of the D of P for illiterate morons or do they want to scrap the D of P and have something different.

Wood Green Delegate. The D of P cannot be replaced, but if the long words were simplified it would make it easier for some people to read.

Fulham Delegate. It is not very scientific to say that because something is laid down in 1904 that it is good for all time. I don't like the word hostility in the principles, I would prefer to see the word opposed used in its place.

Lewisham Delegate. I think that there is more behind this than just altering the wording. It seems that these members object to our very definite opposition to the system we live under. "We should not take these very militant words out of our principles.

Wickford Delegate. The "S.P. have modified the wording of their version of the D of P. We must remember that language modifies from decade to decade.

E.C.Member. This is an argument based entirely on words and language. These things do change. If the D of P were written today it might be written differently. Nobody outside has ever challenged the D of P on these grounds.

PROPAGANDA. Item H. for discussion. Hampstead.

"The need for a speakers test."

Hampstead Delegate. I think there is a complete illogicality in having speakers tests, as if the person is able to speak he will speak and if not he won't. We are all propagandists and because one member does not pass a speakers test it does not disable him from putting the party's case and the ridiculous situation arises of a non-speaker in the chair at a meeting. It does not preclude members from putting the case when they want to. I can see no point in having a speakers test. Let us have classes but not tests for how can we know the members ability unless he speaks on the platform.

E.C.Member. It is not an examination in the ordinary sense. The whole emphasis is on helping the individual concerned, "we get a series of questions evolved as we have gone along. "we put to him the things he may get on the platform. It is designed to help people find out where they can get information.

E.C.Member. The speakers test is an absolute essential to the party. "we must be able to assess that members have at least a minimum of knowledge. I don't think the speakers test goes far enough. In addition there should be a Speakers Committee working in conjunction with the Propaganda committee, to go around meetings and assess whether would be speakers are capable of putting the party's case, answering questions etc.,

E.C.Member. The Party has a high standard of public speaking. Before the tests a member spoke until he said something wrong, and then got hauled over the coals. "What is the alternative if you do away with the speakers test? On the platform you may be asked all sorts of things which you know nothing about. The falling off of meeting spots has not helped members. The Speakers test should only be a start.

CRISES STUDY GROUP.

Hampstead Delegate. We are surprised at a lack of any news of the Crises study group set up last year.

GENERAL SECRETARY. There was a short statement on the Delegate Meeting report that a committee had been set up and were going to start discussions. It is not the usual type of party committee and as two of the members are in Birmingham the only way they can discuss is by letter. It did not come into the report because it was not in the year under review. The subject is controversial and difficult for the committee to submit a snap report to Conference. "We have not yet had a preliminary report.

Floor Resolution GILL (HAMPSTEAD) & WEBB (HAMPSTEAD) "That in view of the omission of any reference to the Crises Study Group in the E.C. report, the Conference should rectify this omission by having an immediate discussion of the present economic position".

E.C.Member. The resolution says that we should discuss crises now because there was not an interim report. The two things don't hang together. Stuff is being circulated by the committee. The desirability of discussing crises should not depend on the failure of the committee to report yet.

AMENDMENT COTTIS (SOUTHEND) & DUNKLEY (SOUTHEND). "Delete 'immediate' and add after the discussion on literature has taken place."

AMENDMENT CARRIED 13 - 11. AS A SUB-RES CARRIED 12 - 11.

EDUCATION. RESOLUTION 7. HACKNEY.

Hackney "That every effort be made to set up a writers' class during the winter of 1958-9." No discussion. CARRIED "WITHOUT DISSENT."

CONFERENCE ADJOURNED FOR LUNCH AT 1.00.p.m.

CONFERENCE RECOMMENCED AT 2.15.p.m.

LITERATURE CONTINUED AS AGREED ON THE SATURDAY. Items E. & G.

Bloomsbury Delegate. This is such an enormous subject, we should have a special meeting to discuss it.

Paddington Delegate. I try to expand my sales of the SS to keep up sales figures. The purpose of the SS is not to have just a solvent journal, but to put over propaganda. I would suggest that articles written in the SS are written because the writers thought the matter worth while. We should direct our writings to the highest common denominator, that is to the party membership, not the lowest common denominator.

Ealing Delegate. The branch feels that the E.C. should arrange for some members to get practical experience in the editing and producing of the SS, not merely by increasing the size of the committee, but by introducing new members in place of some of the old.

Paddington Delegate. We think that in the method of writing we use we make compromises. We assume that the people who read the SS are very ill informed. The simplest articles are the hardest to write, and are very often written by the not so good writers. It is the writers who make this division of socialist and non-socialist. The mood of the SS is not stimulating. We need stimulating and if we are the readers will be.

E.C.Member. We should not spend too much time discussing this. A distinction is seen between theoretical and practical articles. The SS should have some of both. Ideally the party should have two journals, one theoretical and the other for propaganda. Most of the discussion is beside the point. What is needed is lots of people with good knowledge of economics etc., and able to write and study. Able to deliver articles to time. There are too few writers: lots of writers who are not sure of their knowledge of the party and theory and are too little informed about what goes on outside the party. It is these people and the circumstances that they are in which makes the bad writing. Enthusiasm is not enough. Articles often come too late. People are often asked to write articles on special subjects. Topical articles have to be written quickly. Every writer should specialise on a particular subject or subjects, so that on special happenings a special article can be written. The layout of the SS is done by the printer as this would add two or three days to the getting out of the SS. If you were to spend more money on it the look could be altered for the better. We would be short of articles if we didn't put in articles to which some members object. The SS should be primarily Political, Economic & Historical. This is not to say that it cannot deal with other things, but the drive comes from the Object of the party. 30 people wrote for the SS last year and there is some potentially good material amongst these people.

E.C.Member. The SS is not very good and it is the fault of the party. The SS sales figures are still going down. Investigation is not the answer to the distribution problems of the SS. We should try to get a magazine of which we say we are proud. We should have a plan put forward by the Editorial committee. What is done to encourage writers and to produce new writers? Let us see what we can do to plan with the writers, to call a meeting and get a responsible point of view to make the SS better.

Glasgow City Delegate. There are essentials for every writer. First there is greatness of object, because without it you cannot be great. Secondly you must have your object clearly in view. These are fundamentals, and

Unless you get down to these, your articles are bound to be dull. Enthusiasm is what is needed by our writers, for their enthusiasm will awaken more enthusiasm. Shake off your apathy comrades, and remember that eternal vigilance should be the watchword of the socialist. AT THIS JUNCTURE OF THE MEETING THE GENERAL SECRETARY READ A REPORT FROM THE SYDNEY BRANCH OF THE S.P. OF AUSTRALIA, on their activities of the previous year. It was without doubt a magnificent effort and it was generally agreed by Conference that a telegram of congratulations be sent to them.

Standing Orders committee reported that Comrade W. Kerr (W. Ham) wanted to sit but had no credentials with him.

Resolution Baldwin (Camberwell) & Mithell (Camberwell) "That the W. Ham member be allowed to sit". AGREED.

Editorial committee member. We are encouraging new writers. I have been responsible for the writers classes up to about 1956-57. There have been 5 writers classes in the last eight or ten years. It is up to the writer himself after the class, unlike speakers after the speakers test who then go on the speakers list. There are indications now that some members are interested in having a writers class. You have got to finally rely upon members pulling their weight.

Lewisham Delegate. If we are going to refer this matter to a party meeting let us have some practical propositions not this airy-fairy stuff.

Wood Green Delegate. We need articles dealing with the daily life of the workers, and workers in factories.

F.C. Member. Bad or not my branch is selling 22 dozen a month.

Hackney Delegate. Everyone has agreed in substance that there is something wrong with the SS and that it can be improved. That is all we wanted to prove. Any writer worthy of his salt writes to please himself. Many of the writers in the SS are writing down all the time. Those who write for the SS should have discussions and talking points-should meet monthly to give and exchange ideas and outline a policy with the Editorial committee and take it to the E.C. We should expand the scope of our articles. I am prepared to draw up with others a type of policy etc.

FLOOR RESOLUTION BRYAN & WATERS (PADDINGTON). "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to set up a responsible committee which shall prepare a composite plan of action for suggested improvements in the SS. This committee which shall report to a party meeting within three months shall investigate ways of co-ordinating the work of the Editorial committee and writers; the preparation of a definite policy for the SS, ways of encouraging new writers and the formation of writers classes." Paddington Delegate. This resolution should be the first of a series of practical steps which everybody is so concerned about. We have now reached the point where we can do more than pass pious resolutions.

West Ham Delegate. I am opposed to setting up a committee. The party is getting top heavy with committees. We will soon reach the stage where we will have committees investigating the investigating committees.

THE FLOOR RESOLUTION WAS CARRIED 37 - 2.

Resolution Baldwin (Camberwell) & Wilmott (Hackney). "That all the outstanding items on the Conference Agenda be arranged for presentation to the Autumn Delegate Meeting". AGREED.

Fulham Delegate. As we are due to adjourn it is obvious that we cannot discuss the resolution dealing with Crises, would not a meeting of the party be better for a discussion of the subject than this conference?

FLOOR RESOLUTION COX (FULHAM) & JAMES (HACKNEY) "That the E.C. seriously consider summoning a special meeting to discuss the report and matters related, on the subject of Crises." CARRIED BY A LARGE MAJORITY.

RESOLUTION Baldwin (Camberwell) & James (Hackney) "That the 54th

Annual Conference 1958 F.C. Report be adopted". AGREED.

IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED TO ADJOURN AT 6.00.p.m.

ACTING GENERAL SECRETARY.